

COVID-19 Rights at Work FAQ



This is the best information we have as of March 9, 2020. The situation is evolving and information, including guidelines are subject to change.

1) Can I refuse to work if my employer asks me to clean a space where someone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 has been?

No, but if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 your employer should provide you with enhanced personal protective equipment to use while cleaning and appropriate cleaning agents. Your employer must also train you how to use and dispose of this special equipment.

Speak to your Union rep if you have specific concerns about a building or area you are being asked to clean.

2) What if I am immune-compromised, can I request an accommodation from my employer?

Yes. If you have a condition that puts you at a higher risk of infection, you can request to be reassigned from an area where there are known to be infectious blood borne pathogens. However, if your request creates a difficult situation for the employer, it is not guaranteed that you will have this request granted.

3) My employer is taking everyone's temperature before they come to work. Can they do that?

Yes. Based on current community health concerns, the employer is allowed to use a universal, non-invasive screening measure.

4) My employer is asking everyone if they have a health condition that would put them at risk for COVID-19. Do I have to answer?

No. However, your employer can ask if employees are experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19.

If you voluntarily tell your employer about a health condition that puts you at higher risk for COVID-19, your employer must keep that information confidential.

5) My employer is not allowing me to work because I recently traveled internationally. Can they do that?

If you to travelled from an area where there is an outbreak and the federal government is requiring quarantine and are experiencing respiratory ailments, you should contact a medical health professional about how to proceed.

Certain individuals who have recently traveled from China, Iran, South Korea and Italy may be asked to self-quarantine, as those countries are experiencing outbreaks. If you have questions about whether you need to self-quarantine you should contact your local state health department.

If you recently travelled to a location where there is not an outbreak you should be able to work.

All Local 32BJ workers should follow general guidance for how to stay healthy and limit the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing.

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6) My employer is not allowing me to work because I am Asian/Italian/over 40. Can they do that?

This is illegal. Your employer cannot prohibit you from working on this basis.

Contact your Union representative if you believe your employer is unfairly stopping you from working.

7) My employer sent me home from work because I am coughing, what can I do?

If have a fever (100.5 and over) and respiratory symptoms (coughing, sneezing), go home and contact a medical professional. If you do not currently have a medical professional, you can contact the Local 32BJ member services line at 1-800-551-3225 to find one.

If have respiratory symptoms, no fever, and have potential exposure to COVID-19, go home and contact a medical professional.

Contact your Union representative if you believe your employer is unfairly stopping you from working.

All Local 32BJ workers should follow general guidance for how to stay healthy and limit the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing.